

# 2014 PNG Women's Forum Priority Action Items

## Full List of Recommendations

### Developing the Next Generation of Women Leaders

First Priority Action Item: Encourage mentoring and create opportunities for young women to be exposed to models. Carry forward the Mentoring Initiative developed at the 2014 PNG Women's Forum to match mentor and mentee organizations (Exxon Mobil PNG and The Voice Inc. is the first such pilot partnership). Corporations could work with high schools to bring young women in to shadow senior level managers and executives. Start a speaker series at schools at all grade levels to expose girls to a variety of career paths. Show them what they can do with their lives. Get volunteer speakers from corporations, government agencies, international donors, the diplomatic corps, etc. Give girls hands on experience. Work with corporations and government entities to create internship opportunities for students. Consider making it part of high school or university graduation requirements so that internships are not perceived as generating a loss in potential income. Look into starting "Take Your Daughter to Work Day."

Recommendations to Mentoring Initiative Developed at the 2014 PNG Women's Forum:

- ❖ Bring businesses into the mentoring initiative. Have big businesses mentor smaller businesses. Loop in New Zealand, which has a business mentoring program.  
*(from the Getting Women into Business Working Group)*
- ❖ Focus on male-dominated fields, such as STEM. Take Women in Engineering up on its offer to bring speakers to schools to discuss engineering as a career path.  
*(from the Investing in Women Through Education Working Group)*

Second Priority Action Item: Create a network of young women leaders so that they can learn from each other's experience, act as a support network, create opportunities to celebrate success, and brainstorm ways to encourage their peers. Bring together existing groups that focus on young people (such as the National Youth Commission, The Voice, YWCA, and church groups) to ask them to link together their female members. Encourage peer leadership based on shared values, ideas, and aspirations.

Other Action Items (for future consideration)

- ❖ Encourage the media to regularly profile women leaders, and emerging leaders.
- ❖ Create mechanisms for young women to shadow members of corporate boards. This will allow them to learn corporate governance first-hand, and gain insight into various fields of work.
- ❖ Make sure that thirty percent of the participants at the 2015 PNG Women's Forum are young women (and men).

### Women's Groups as Agents of Change for Peace and Security

First Priority Action Item: Address the root causes of conflict by empowering women through capacity building and training for women and youth. Increase women's role in society and elevate women's position in PNG culture. Lead by example, and teach women to be role models. Use both modern and traditional tactics to teach women to mediate conflicts using community-based approaches. Teach women life skills, literacy, and how to counsel peers and members of their communities. Teach women

not to tolerate violence, and to advocate for others to walk away from conflict. Focus on reconciliation and reintegration. Remember to include men in these discussions.

Second Priority Action Item: Build a human rights network. Teach people their rights, and how to advocate for them. Hold integrated and inclusive dialogues. Include the church in these discussions.

### Investing in Women through Education

First Priority Action Item: Invest in teachers, provide performance-based incentives and career enhancement opportunities, and provide incentives for women to make a career out of teaching. Teachers are not equipped (both education/capacity-wise and resource-wise) to teach to the standard that today's marketplace demands. The system for hiring, training, and promoting teachers needs to be overhauled. The capacity of school inspectors needs to be increased so that they can carry out this lofty task, and school curricula need an independent examination to ensure they are adequately preparing graduates for the workforce (or to become employers). In this curriculum review, traditionally male STEM and entrepreneurship subjects should be well incorporated. Current teachers need to be evaluated, and underperforming teachers need to be let go or trained to bring them up to par. Incentives need to attract, retain, and promote teachers (especially female teachers). Consider giving scholarships to university students that commit to teach for a certain number of years. After teachers have performed well for a certain number of years, consider providing them with scholarships to pursue higher-level degrees and specialized certificates. Consider promoting teachers who have performed well after a certain number of years and have the requisite educational background into administrative roles. Create national recognition programs for good teachers and top students (modeled perhaps on TIPNG's MC camp). Increase the number of female professors in universities by establishing quotas for women, and putting the onus on universities to recruit them.

Second Priority Action Item: Work with headmasters to review enrollment statistics, identify common themes that prevent girls from staying in school, and develop localized strategies at the provincial and district levels to keep girls in school. Strategies could include initiatives such as establishing mentoring/role model opportunities, installing showers and bathrooms in all schools (so that women are comfortable attending school when menstruating), providing day care so that women can return to school after giving birth, or working with communities to address bride price pressures that can prevent girls from staying in school. Find ways to motivate students to stay in school that are not obligation-based (i.e. having to stay in school because parents worked hard to pay for fees, etc.). Show the positive role that school plays in advancing girl's futures.

Other Action Items (for future consideration)

- ❖ Address perceptions that the minimum level of education needed for girls is elementary school. Do away with elementary school (K-2) and making primary schools run from K-6.
- ❖ Consider making Universal Basic Education (UBE) a law, not just a policy.

### Helping Women Lead Healthy Lives

First Priority Action Item: Increase coordination among all stakeholders within the women's health field through the creation of a database. A major challenge in the implementation and provision of health services throughout the country by government and NGO providers is the lack of coordination and

information sharing. The dissemination of information is a challenge in the health sector and there is no cross-sectoral database or directory that showcases what organizations are doing what and where. It is difficult to select a women's health priority because there is little information about statistics and current initiatives. Thus, a clear gap in services or an urgent health issue is not obvious until the necessary mapping and data is collected.

Second Priority Action Item: Carry out a targeted education strategy for politicians and media professionals on a priority women's health issue with a keen eye towards influencing the government's budget process to secure sustainable resources to address that issue. Using the lessons learned from the Population Parliamentary Development Group initiative, the PNG Women's Forum Action Leaders would use technical experts to educate politicians and media on a particular topic so that they can be groomed into powerful advocates for a women's health cause. Two examples of issues that affect women's health are alcohol abuse, cervical cancer, and the implementation of the healthy island concept.

Other Action Items (for future consideration)

- ❖ Address leadership and management issues within the government's public health system. Groom changemakers within the organization to carry out strategic advocacy from within. The challenges identified include: lack of information dissemination due to personal jealousies, absence of transformational leaders who are educated and promote the development of young civil servants, lack of professional development through mentoring opportunities and training for entry and mid-level employees, lack of accountability, monitoring and evaluation, and low quality data to influence public policies. For example, one participant in the discussion raised the need to change regulations to address the lack of high-level practitioners so that nurses or other lower-level practitioners could carry out minor procedures. A changemaker within the organization would have to take the lead to produce results. A second example is the debate among health specialists arguing for more or for less screenings due to the lack of resources to provide medical attention to those who are screened and discover their ailment (ignorance is bliss!). A strategic advocacy campaign would have to be carried out to change the way philosophical mindset and refocus the discussion on working together to obtain more resources so that both screenings and medical attention can be provided.

## **Role of Men and Youth in Combating Gender Based Violence**

First Priority Action Item: Positively influence the redefinition of traditional gender roles through innovative youth outreach programs that can be replicated throughout the country. Find program models that incorporate best practices and recruit implementing partners to carry out youth outreach programs through schools and churches. One innovative and successful tool to influence gender roles and traditional stereotypes is sports. The Rugby League Against Violence would be a key partner and the PNG Women's Forum Action Plan Leaders could explore supporting efforts to replicate their successful programs throughout the country. Developing handbook materials and engaging male champions in the outreach initiatives are other areas to contribute towards this action item.

Second Priority Action Item: Develop and carry out a public and media messaging campaign against gender based violence. Bring in strategic marketing talent to develop a simple yet powerful message to communicate that violence is not acceptable. Using respected sports figures, male champions, young leaders, other local celebrities, music, or any other influential and innovative marketing tool, the goal is to

influence the public mindset about violence and gender-based violence. The media campaign could also include awareness on the Family Protection Bill and highlighting local success stories that other cities, districts, or provinces could replicate. Among the examples of success stories that were mentioned are programs in the national capital district, UN safe cities programs, as well as inmate and outmate programs.

#### Other Action Items (for future consideration)

- ❖ Ensure that the current efforts to change the education curriculum are properly implemented. The Department of Education is working on updating the national curriculum and teaching materials to positively redefine traditional gender roles. A timeline for the completion of this project is unknown.

### Getting Women into Business

First Priority Action Item: Gather and share information on financing available to female entrepreneurs. Women are not aware of what funding is available, how to tap into it, and what the requirements are. Compile this information into a document (with POCs at various institutions) and disseminate it. Consider holding info sessions for women throughout the country to review this information, and introduce them to representatives from various financial institutions.

Second Priority Action Item: Use PNG's APEC membership to increase access to international markets for PNG business women. Have PNG businesswomen meet with PNG's APEC Secretariat to explore ways to use PNG's APEC membership to create opportunities for PNG women to put on or participate in trade fairs. Feed information on APEC-related opportunities to women business owners on a regular basis. Organize women business owners to attend the annual APEC Women and the Economy Forum (none went this year). Display products from women-owned business on the margins of PNG-hosted APEC events, with a special focus on showcasing PNG specialty products (November 2014 Energy Working group, co-hosting the Policy Partnership on Women and the Economy with the Philippines in early 2015, hosting APEC in 2018). Consider establishing a permanent location to display women-produced products for purchase by international visitors.

#### Other Action Items (for future consideration)

- ❖ Improve coordination and information sharing between existing business/entrepreneurship training programs to help foster an entrepreneurial culture and encourage innovation. Training opportunities should not just be a series of one offs. Try to link together existing training programs so that people can "graduate" from one set of trainings to the next, and so that training culminates in real opportunities for women to start businesses. Increase consultation with women business owners on the government's SME policy with an eye to lowering the costs/barriers to doing business in PNG. Women face higher costs than men in starting businesses (lack of access to capital, collateral, having to have husbands sign documents as co-owners, etc.). Women want to know what the government plans to do to decrease these barriers so that women can play a greater role in PNG's economy.
- ❖ Share information on what the Bank of Papua New Guinea is doing on financial inclusion more broadly amongst women business owners. There is a lot of good work underway, and women want to know what the Bank is finding so that they can help to replicate best practices.

## Harnessing the Power of Technology to Empower Women

First Priority Action Item: Support the PNG Google Development Group in implementing a virtual information platform that addresses a priority “information needs” identified by the PNG Women’s Forum Action Plan leaders. Use technology to improve access to information, activity coordination, and organizational collaboration. The tool would help community organizations, NGOs, the PNG government, and development partners in their strategic planning and implementation efforts. The information platform would be updated via crowdsourcing features by its users. An example would be a visual mapping of all of the women’s organizations in the country with their contact information, description of activities, and geographical presence. The PNG Department of National Planning expressed interest in funding a virtual web-based information mapping tool to help them plan programs to address gender-based violence. The virtual information platform could be on a website and also as a mobile application. As the users, the PNG Women’s Forum Action Plan leaders would provide content data for and can help recruit investors and funding donors. Volunteers at the district-level and existing women’s networks would also be tapped to obtain and share the information data. The nascent Google Development Group (with members in Port Moresby and Lae) aims to host the hub of the Silicon Valley of the Pacific in Papua New Guinea. Made up of talented volunteers who are professionals, students, and entrepreneurs, the Google Development Group promotes a start-up culture and looks for ways to apply their technology skills to address real issues.

Second Priority Action Item: Train remote and rural women how to use basic features of mobile phones and raise awareness on the positive impact of mobile technology in women’s lives; particularly in the areas of health, agriculture, and education. Seek partnerships from the major mobile phone providers and other community volunteers to devise an outreach strategy to go out to remote areas and train women on basic phone features beyond making phone calls and innovative ways in which mobile phones can empower them and improve their lives. For example, volunteers can be paired up with the Digicel sales agents who go out to remote areas and carry out trainings on basic phone features, such as texting.

Other Action Items (for future consideration)

- ❖ Develop a strategy to make solar chargers more affordable and accessible to women who live in rural and remote areas. The current solar chargers available, which cost approximately K200, are out of reach for many rural women. Women cannot access the benefits of mobile phone technology if they do not have access to energy to charge the phones.